

REMARKS

The specification amendment conforms the specification with the drawing. The drawing amendment to Figure 1 responds to the examiner's objections to the originally-filed drawing, those to Figure 2 add reference numerals discussed in the specification.

Claim 2 was rejected as indefinite. The examiner suggested changes that would overcome the formal rejection. However, claim 2 has been amended in a different manner from that suggested, and it is believed that the amendments serve to overcome the indefiniteness rejection.

Claim 1 was rejected as anticipated by the Kurihara et al. '305 reference. In that regard, claim 1 has been amended to recite steps that are not disclosed in or suggested by the Kurihara et al. reference. More specifically, claim 1 now also recites the step of maintaining a speed gradient difference below a predetermined difference value by regulating the engine rotational speed gradient at a transition between a startup phase and a drive phase.

Claim 2 was rejected as anticipated by the Bates '242 reference. In that regard, claim 2 has been amended to recite that the gradient regulator maintains a speed gradient difference lower than a predetermined difference, which enables the engine rotational speed gradient and the transmission output-side rotational speed gradient to approach each other at the end of a starting phase of the vehicle, which the Bates reference does not teach.

The newly-added claims also contain the type of recitations referred to above, which distinguish over the disclosures contained in the references

relied upon.

Based upon the foregoing amendments and remarks, the claims as they now stand in the application are believed clearly to be in allowable form in that they patentably distinguish over the disclosures contained in the references that were cited and relied upon by the examiner, whether those references be considered in the context of 35 U.S.C. § 102 or of 35 U.S.C. § 103. Additionally, the drawings as amended overcome the examiner's objections. Consequently, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and reconsideration and reexamination of the application is respectfully requested with a view toward the issuance of an early Notice of Allowance.

The examiner is cordially invited to telephone the undersigned attorney if this amendment raises any questions, so that any such question can be quickly resolved in order that the present application can proceed toward allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alfred J. Mangels', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alfred J. Mangels
Reg. No. 22,605
4729 Cornell Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45241
Tel.: (513) 469-0470

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